

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

*****news release

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Evans - 343-5634

For Release APRIL 19, 1964

SITE OF FIRST SALMON CANNERY TO BE DEDICATED

The site of the first Pacific Coast salmon cannery, constructed in Sacramento 100 years ago, will be dedicated as a National Historic Landmark April 28, George B. Hartzog, Jr., Director of the National Park Service, announced today.

Senator E. L. Bartlett of Alaska, a member of the Senate Merchant Marine and Fisheries Subcommittee, will be principal speaker. Salmon cannerymen from throughout the Pacific Northwest and Alaska are being invited to attend.

Other special guests will include Governor Edmund G. (Pat) Brown and Nick Bez, President of Peter Pan Seafood Company and a pioneer Alaska and Pacific Northwest salmon canner.

Under Secretary of the Interior James K. Carr will participate in the unveiling of a commemorative plaque at the site in a ceremony at 11:30 a.m.

Lloyd Turnacliffe, prominent in the Sacramento fishing industry and a former vice president of the National Fisheries Institute, will be master of ceremonies.

The forerunner of today's multimillion dollar Pacific salmon canning industry was begun in the spring of 1864 by three transplanted Maine fishermen, William and George Hume and Andrew Hapgood.

William Hume entered the fishing business in Sacramento in 1852 and was joined by his brother, George, a few years later. The business at first was limited to the sale of fresh and salted salmon.

The brothers then persuaded Hapgood, a former schoolmate, to come from Maine to join the enterprise. Hapgood was a fisherman and a tinsmith with experience in canning lobster in New England.

The new firm was short on capital, so Hapgood brought along some crude can-making equipment on his trip from the East. The partners enlarged William Hume's original cabin and purchased a large scow for additional factory floor space. They added an 18 by 24-foot extension to the cabin of the scow for a can-making shop.

The salmon were packed in salted water, and the cans were boiled about an hour at 230 degrees. Later a pickle was added to each can to replace the salt. The cans' exteriors were painted a bright red with a combination of red lead, turpentine and linseed oil. After this, the consumer identified canned salmon by the flaming red can, even when there was no label.

The new industry suffered a bumpy beginning. The equipment was crude and every operation had to be done by hand. At least half the cans manufactured the first year burst at the seams.

Despite all handicaps, the company sold 2,000 cases at \$5 per dozen cans the first year and the business was launched. Because of this success, numerous other canneries sprang up. By 1882 there were 20 salmon canneries along the Sacramento River, producing about 200,000 cases a year.

After this peak year, the industry declined because of a sharp reduction in the number of salmon entering the Sacramento River. The shortage of fish was attributed to silting of the river by hydraulic gold mining. Salmon canning was discontinued on the Sacramento after 1919.

The Hapgood-Hume Company was gone long before the peak pack of 1882. A decline in salmon runs in the Sacramento in 1865 started the partners looking for a better source of supply. The following year they established a cannery at Eagle Cliff in Wahkiakum County, Washington.

Today, salmon canning in the United States, a \$100 million a year packing business, is a direct outgrowth of the pioneering efforts of the Hapgood-Hume Company. Eighty-one percent of last year's pack was canned in Alaska, the remainder in Washington and Oregon.

x x x